



Trolley Times



Volume # 27

News of the North Slope Historic District

April-May-June 2002

From Distribution Yard to Play Yard Before the Park

by Jay Turner

Our North Slope Historic District Park is located on a property that Tacoma City Light obtained in November 1951. Tacoma City Light purchased a vacant lot for a "Distribution Yard;" the city was growing and needed more electrical capacity. A photograph taken on November 17, 1953 shows transformers with connecting power lines indicating that the "yard" was ready for service.

The term "Distribution Yard" gave way to "Substation" and the K St. Substation remained in active service until late 1983, according to information obtained from Tacoma Power. When the method of



power distribution changed and the K St. Substation was decommissioned, it sat vacant for years with the transformers still in place, but disconnected. After removing all the power equipment, the lot was still left vacant, on purpose, giving Tacoma City Light time to verify that the land was not contaminated and could be put to other use.

The local residents noted that Tacoma Power (the new name since 1989 for Tacoma City Light) had a vacant lot and wondered what would become of it. There were many discussions on a method, any method, that would prevent another huge apartment complex from being built in the middle of our Historic District. It was Kelly Halligan who suggested a "Pocket Park". That sounded like an excellent idea, but no one could figure out a way to purchase the property. Thea Foss bond money became the solution and source of funds for the purchase of the park.

At last, on July 26, 2000, Tacoma Power approved the sale of the property for \$30,000. According to Curtis Hancock of MetroParks, the City of Tacoma became the owner of the property in April 2001. With the city owning the land, and an agreement that MetroParks would maintain the park, our North Slope Historic District Park was built these last few months.

Park Dedication

On June 8th at 1:30 p.m. the North Slope Historic District will dedicate the new park at North 8th and K Streets to the late Valerie Sivinski. The former Tacoma Historic Preservation Officer was instrumental in formation of the Historic District, guiding residents through the difficult beginning series of hearings.

Roger Johnson, NSHD representative on the Landmarks Preservation Commission, perhaps puts it best: "We owe a debt of gratitude to Valerie for her infectious enthusiasm for historic preservation and restoration, without which our efforts would have been fruitless. She helped us see the value of all the elements of the neighborhood, from the small modest cottage to the big showplace. Her efforts helped restore not only the homes, but also the neighborhood's pride. Valerie Sivinski brought the North Slope Historic District together as a family with a goal: to preserve the lessons and values of our history."

The dedication program is scheduled to begin outdoors at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 8, at the North Slope Historic District Park. Tim McDonald, Valerie's husband, will speak about her. Elizabeth Anderson and Michael Sullivan, two former Historic Preservation Officers, will offer comments. A dedication stone will then be unveiled. This stone, carved and inscribed, is a gift from Tim McDonald to the NSHD Park.

A reception will follow in the Immanuel Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, (entrance on North 9th), where refreshments will be served and a picture display will highlight the neighborhood's historic homes. All North Slope residents are cordially invited. There also will be invited guests from around the city and state.

PLEASE COME AND CELEBRATE!



North Slope Historic District Park Now open for play!



A Big Thank You!!

*Nick Kristensen & Julie Turner have put in a lot of hours, with the help of Jerry Cearley from **Jungle Fever**, to landscape our park. Now, if we could just decide what to do with the poles....*

Dates to Remember

May 27 – Memorial Day

June 1 – Adopt-a-Spot litter pickup, 10 a.m.

**June 8 – Park Dedication 1:30 p.m.
at No. 8th & K Sts.**

June 14 – Flag Day

June 16 – Fathers' Day

June 21 – Summer

July – next newsletter



North Slope Historic District Zoning

by Julie Turner

When zoning was initiated in the 1950s, the lower portion of the current North Slope Historic District was a "throw-away" area, with run-down homes, poor or elderly owners and little pride in appearances. In the 1960s and 70s, a number of homes were razed to build apartments



and owners were no doubt glad to get what they could from developers. The three large units in the 800 and 900 blocks of North K were built at this time, as were a number of smaller (12-14 unit) complexes; several more small units were added even in the 1980s.

The building of these large multi-units reflected the R-5 zoning that was assigned to much of the lower part of the current Historic District. At some point, the zoning was changed to R4-L, a category which allows almost anything; most of the other R4-L areas in the city are apartment neighborhoods without significant single-family homes, the exceptions being NSHD and 2 small neighborhoods on the East Side.

The northern portions of the North Slope Historic District (I, J, K, L and parts of M) carry the R4-L zoning designation, while the upper streets of NSHD are R-2SRD. The Steering Committee of the North Slope Historic District feels that R4-L is a category which threatens the future of any house damaged enough to warrant demolition. For instance, the Historic District ordinance doesn't require rebuilding of a single-family home if one burns. The zoning allows a house or up to a 4-plex on a 50 x100 foot lot, albeit the guidelines require building with design criteria spelled out in the Historic District ordinance. Thus, the historic ordinance affords us some protection.

The NSHD Steering Committee has a sub-committee pledged to work on a new city-wide zoning category for "historic neighborhoods." We agreed to wait for the residential zoning review being done city-wide – hopefully completed in 2002. The process has now started, and NSHD will be kept aware of the progress the committee makes.

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Are you seeing a potential car theft in progress?

Call 911!

Our streets and alleys have been targeted lately.

North Slope Zoning cor

A new zoning category would need to address the issues that are inherent in the R4-L category which threaten the historic character of the neighborhood. Those issues include lot size for multi-units, off-street parking for at least two vehicles per unit, limiting new conversions without parking provisions, and requiring the replacement of a single-family home, not a multi-unit, if a single-family home is destroyed.

If you have comments or questions about zoning, please feel free to call one of the these committee members.

Julie Turner	383-2329
Roger Johnson	272-5894
Dan Klein	272-0938
Bill Johnston	627-6860
Kathryn Longwell	627-0423

Feb. North Slope Meeting

A large turnout enjoyed Mayor Bill Baarsma's slide presentation and talk at the last North Slope meeting February 25. Thanks to Mayor Baarsma for responding to our neighborhood concerns. And thanks to all the neighbors who brought such yummy desserts!

Tacoma Cares News

The City is in the process of rewriting the nuisance code, which deals with overgrown vegetation, litter, and debris. Representatives of the neighborhood councils are providing input and review. Anyone interested in receiving a draft may call Lisa at 591-5267

Handy Web Addresses

North Slope Historic District – www.tacomnorthslope.com
 Kevin Phelps (our council representative) –
[www.kphelps@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:kphelps@cityoftacoma.org)
 Safe Streets – www.safest.org
 Tacoma – www.cityoftacoma.org
 News Tribune - www.tribnet.com

Readers: Call your suggestions of good web addresses to 627-4537 and we'll compile a list for the next newsletter. Thanks!



Police/Community Meeting

The last Sector 2 police/community meeting was held April 10 at Wheelock Library. The Police Department is considering locations for the new substation to be built with bond issue monies. Anyone with a suggestion for location can phone C.L.O. Kothstein at 591-5290, C.L.O. Stark at 594-7837, or Lieut. Fedderson at 591-5697

Adopt-a-Spot News

On a beautiful sunny morning, March 2, eight North Slope residents collected 70 pounds of litter on North I Street. Thanks to regulars Velda, Susan, Chet, Marilyn, and welcome to newcomers Ruth, Yukie, Greg, and Kelsey. Litter seems to be an everlasting problem. How can we get people to stop discarding cans, bottles, paper wherever they may be?

The next scheduled pickup will be Saturday, June 1, at 10:00 a.m. We will meet in the parking lot behind Immanuel Presbyterian, No. 9th and J. Join us in this easy way to get exercise and help our neighborhood boundary look neater!

Salmon Stickers

Save the date, Saturday, July 20 at 10 a.m. for a city-wide Salmon (Save the Bay) Sticker work party to be held in the North Slope. More details will be in the July newsletter.



The Back Page...

North Slope Historic District

Steering Committee:

Thomas Hudson	973-3700
Brian & Betsy Johnson	274-9344
Bill Johnston	627-6860
Dan & Angie Klein	272-0938
Chuck Kohler & Stacy Schell	779-8757
Nick Kristensen & Patty LeBlanc	272-2884
Kathryn Longwell	627-0423
Bev & Charles Lord	572-5742
Velda McDonald	627-4192
Judy Martin	572-3059
Mitch Robinson	272-0165
Barbara & Ralph Tomberg	572-1532
Marilyn Torgerson	627-4537
Julie Turner	383-2329

The steering committee welcomes new members:

Brian & Betsy Johnson
 Chuck Kohler & Stacy Schell
 Kathryn Longwell
 Charles & Bev Lord

There are now 20 neighbors you can contact with your concerns and suggestions for the North Slope Neighborhood District.

Give them your input!

North Slope Reported Crimes for the Month of April:

8 car prowls
 8 car thefts
 5 burglaries
 3 domestic violence incidents
 1 aggravated assault
 4 simple assault



Thank you to:

Tacoma Cares

for the printing of the newsletter.

We appreciate your support.

Clean Streets

Would you like to use one of your two free yearly pick-ups of junk from the City of Tacoma? Call 573-2468 to request a pick-up of boxes, appliances, carpets, mattresses and other trash from your parking strip.

Let's keep the North Slope looking clean!

We still have a few T-Shirts!

They will be available at the Park Dedication Reception at Immanuel Church.

Sizes XL & 2XL, \$12.00



Handy Phone Numbers

Police non emergency	798-4721
C.L.O. Kothstein	591-5290
C.L.O. Stark	594-7837
Traffic Engineering Tacoma-Pierce County	591-5500
Health Dept. Tacoma-Pierce County	798-6500
Bar Assn. Referral	383-3432
Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Metro Parks	591-5299



The North Slope Historic District is made up of the people living between "I" and Grant Streets from Division to Steele.